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The Next Heroic Age of Christianity

BY JUSTIN WROE NIXON

And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also. 1 *John* 4:21.

BY ALL the signs of both public and private life we are slowly moving into the next heroic age of Christianity. By a heroic age, I mean an age in which it costs something to be a Christian. It costs something now, you say. Yes, but by and large it costs now what a club costs, a philanthropy or a school. In only a minority of cases does it cost what a vital religion costs, tension in the soul, the choice of Christ against the world, the surrender of petty selfish ambition to a higher sacrificial loyalty. When Hebrew religion reached one of its heroic periods, the prophet Jeremiah says that he was conscious of a burning fire shut in his bones. In the bones of the Christian church today, there are only smoldering ashes. But the time will come when those ashes will turn to leaping flame.

How shall we find our way into such a time? In partial answer to that question we would say that if the next heroic age of Christianity is like such ages in the past, we shall find some great neglected spiritual insight of our historic faith acting as a guide post giving us direction toward the life of the new time. All the great ages of Christianity have had their great texts. When Francis of Assisi went questing after his Lady Poverty, the words which burned themselves into his soul were "provide neither gold nor silver nor brass for your purses, nor scrip for your journey . . . for the workman is worthy of his meat." And the Franciscan vow to poverty and the life of the saint which embodied it saved the church from disruption for three hundred years. The age of the Reformation struck its

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roots into the text "the just shall live by faith." The foreign missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century was inspired by the words "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The New Commandment

It is open to all of us to surmise what the text of the next great age of Christianity will be. My guess is no better than yours. I can only speak of certain words of scripture which keep coming back to me in these days as charged with the potencies of a new epoch. They are utterly simple words. They contain a minimum of abstract theology, but a maximum of conviction and of insight. How casually the writer of John's first epistle discloses the secret of his own joy and power. "And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God love his brother also."

At first sight this must appear to be the most pacific text in the world and it is difficult to see how it could provoke any commotion in modern religion, or involve any conflict or adventure. But there is hardly an application of this text which is not today being challenged right down to the ground. What are these challenges? Let us look at them and perhaps we shall see why a Christianity that can meet them must be a heroic Christianity.

First of all, there is the challenge of Russia. Russia today contains one hundred and fifty millions of people, who promise in a few generations to grow to three hundred millions. Russia holds within its grasp eastern Europe and all of central and northern Asia. Its government, being fundamentally hostile in political and economic outlook to the governments of the western world, is waging the most determined effort to stamp out Christianity that Europe has known since the fourth century. And yet with all the evils connected with this regime, the Russian people and their government practice a racial equality to which most of the Christians of western Europe and North America can make no pretense. Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard tells us that the Russians seem to have practically no color sense and that Slavs, Tartars and Mongols mingle in their schools and in the other relationships of life with little friction or sense of strain. The Russian, according to Professor Hart, fraternizes so naturally and genuinely with the Asiatic races that he is incorporating them into his system in a way that makes British rule in India seem like a veneer.

The Negro Problem

Now let us look on our side of the shield. When American lawyers attended a great international gathering in London a few years ago, some of them were met at the dock by sandwich men wearing placards with such legends as "America, the only civilized country which still burns people alive." "Americans! Go home and stop your lynchings."

Again. A Negro student in New York city was one day standing on the subway platform waiting to enter an approaching train. A party of sailors from a war vessel came down the steps just as the train pulled in. The Negro started to walk into a coach, but one of the sailors struck him down, saying as he did so, "That 'nigger' thought he was going to get into the same train with me." (This incident while I was a student at Columbia university.)

A friend of mine is a distinguished Negro educator. He is a mulatto and can easily pass as a white man. But his wife is of a darker hue. Recently my friend unburdened his heart to me. One of his problems is to know where he can eat in public with his wife. He himself is served in almost every restaurant. But he never knows when he takes his wife into a restaurant whether something insulting will not be said which will send her home ill for the rest of the day.

Here is the challenge of Russia. On the one hand you have the world's greatest non-Christian, non-religious power, where race feeling is almost entirely absent. On the other hand you have the great Anglo-Saxon Christian powers and you have America in particular where that feeling is at a maximum. The great majority of the people of the world are people of color. Think of the continents, Asia, Africa, and South America. Even in the white race the color sense is weak among the Latins and the Slavs. It is strongest in that portion of the white race where Protestantism is also strongest, in the Anglo-Saxon. Now the self-consciousness and the self-respect of the colored peoples of the earth are growing rapidly. In view of that fact what do you think of the permanent prospects of the Anglo-Saxon type of Christianity in the color world?

I started to read a parable the other day. It began as follows: "A man of color was going down the highway of history, and he fell among thieves. They beat him and robbed him and left him by the road to die. There came that way an Englishman, journeying to distant lands to take up the white man's burden. He saw the man of color and passed by on the other side. After a little there came along a very rich man, an American, whose pockets were bulging with the largess of philanthropy which he was going to distribute to all the nations. He looked at the man of color, tossed him a coin, and went on. And then there came a despised Russian communist. He stooped down and picked up the man——-." I closed the book at that point and read no further, for I perceived that the parable was written against my own people.

The Test of Sincerity

"And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God, love his brother also." Do we love our brethren? The supreme test of our sincerity in answering that question in the twentieth century is going to come in connection with our brethren of color. American Protestantism certainly can not give an adequate answer to that question without becoming a heroic faith.

Another challenge that our text encounters today is found in the growing respectability of atheism. The atheism of our time is quite different from the Victorian agnosticism with which many of us were familiar in our youth. John Stuart Mill, Thomas Huxley and John Morley were agnostics, but that did not keep them from being teachers and exemplars of the devout

They were agnostics, but they regretted it. The modern atheist of college chair and magazine on the other hand proclaims proudly that there is no God and that he is glad of it. This is a new temper. To the meaning of that temper, the words of Professor Hocking give us a clue. "Whether men shall come to look upon their lives," he says, "in terms of a cosmic demand and also in terms of a cosmic concern for their good is no less a matter than the ultimate life or death of human society."

Personally, I do not lament the fact that this issue has come. As Russia may force us to put our own house in order in social and economic affairs, so the

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respectability of atheism may force us to take our faith in God more seriously. A bear market in the securities of Christian theism may be entirely salutary. It will shake out the speculators and the marginal traders, those who will take a flier in religion between golf seasons if you make religion easy enough to believe and convenient enough to practice. But a decline in the securities of theistic faith will not affect so profoundly those who have invested in those securities for the long pull, who know the moral and spiritual earnings of this faith throughout history and who have knowledge of its hidden assets. As these people are approached by vendors of the stock certificates of the latest religious novelty they will ask whether these manufacturers of negation pay dividends in sorrow and in trouble. "Do they support you when all else fails you?" "Will their product stand the weathering of the years after the achievements of a lifetime have fallen in ruins about you?" "Will it protect one against the storms of lust, greed and despair to which the climate of our earth-bound life is subject?"

I shall not regret the coming of the day when men who believe in God will say so thoughtfully, knowing that there will be some among their friends who will think them a little soft in the head. The great ages of Christianity have been those ages when men have had to choose their faith in preference to reasonable and more convenient alternatives. Such an age we have not had in the western world since the seventeenth century. But just such an age is certainly coming on. And one of the questions it will put to us is suggested by our text. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God——." Do we love God? For the first time in many of our lives this question is no longer a platitude.

There is still another challenge, however, directed at the spiritual insight of our text, which impresses some of us as the most formidable of all. It is the challenge which arises from the flooding of our lives with things. The domination of our lives by things is one of the perils we incur from living in the machine age.

Much Hurry, Little Thinking

How genuine that peril is we may discern from that picture of present day existence in America which we find in the volume entitled "Middletown." The people of Middletown are tremendously busy. They have many engagements. There is a vast deal of going to and fro, of rushing about in cars from one activity to another. But there is very little thinking going on in Middletown, very little freedom of thought concerning the great social issues of the day, very little appreciation of what man's long travail of the ages has meant in the creation of the higher interests and qualities of the human spirit. It is a picture of a life dispersed and superficial, a life of hectic dullness.

As I read this book, I was reminded more than once of those lines of Vachel Lindsay in his poem, "The Leaden Eyed":

> Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly,
> Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
> Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
> Not that they die, but that they die like sheep.

Let us assume that the picture of contemporary American life as presented in "Middletown" is overdrawn. There is enough truth in it to reveal perhaps the most sinister challenge that religion in our time has to face. This challenge lies in the danger that we may become incapable of any great love at all. For love involves choice, and discipline. It means devotion to the best, if necessary, against all the world. And this modern life of ours, segmented as it is by a multitude of trivial concerns, deafened by a thousand clamant futilities, is in danger of bartering for mechanical novelties with their vagrant interests that integrity of soul which is known only to those who have found the meaning of love in great and permanent loyalties.

Revising the Church's Program

Thus we are confronted today by the question, "Can we really love at all?" Against all the diversions and

the seductions of the machine age can we choose certain lofty goals of human living to which we shall give ourselves, with all the disciplines of the soul that such a choice involves?"

The very asking of this question throws a flood of light upon the modern demand for a convenient religion and an "adapted" church. It is possible that the church should radically revise its program to meet the needs of men and women living under the pressure of our industrial system, and if those outside the church will only help us they will find many inside the church ready to cooperate with them. But before we revise the program of Christianity to make it easy for any one, let us remember that the Christian religion has been kept alive in the world not by those who found it easy but by those who found it hard. Christianity was not easy for the apostle Paul, for Savonarola or for Wesley. Love is never easy. It always means choice and discipline. And a heroic Christianity has always involved deep and elemental choices and a disciplined career for its followers precisely because such a Christianity has been a religion of loving obedience to the most enthralling vision of the possibilities of human life that has ever come to man upon this planet. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." "This commandment have we from him."

The World to Be Redeemed

Get rid of the obsolete in Christianity? Yes. But make Christianity easy? No. The only Christianity worth preserving is a religion of Love, illumining a Cross.

Thus far we have surveyed some of the signs of the times which indicate that a new heroic age of Christianity is coming on. Symbolized by Soviet Russia with its religious persecution and its racial equality, there is the growing pitiless challenge of the non-Christian world to close up the gap between our Christian profession and our practice. It is the gap between the belief and the conduct of Christians which stands in the way of Christian progress everywhere around the world. As a great Hindoo leader expresses it, "If you practiced the Sermon on the Mount, or even the ideals of the prophets of Israel you would have all Asia at the feet of your God."

There is the challenge to take our faith thoughtfully, knowing that there are other views of life in our modern secular society which may seem more plausible than our Christian belief in the God of Jesus. And there is that final development of a dispersed and superficial existence, the spiritual outgrowth of an age which has apotheosized comfort, which is producing an increasing number of people who are more sensitive to the irritations of religion and the inconveniences of its disciplines than they are to its goals, its resources and its infinite satisfactions.

It is the convergence of these various developments in the life of our generation which seems to point to the coming of a new heroic age of Christianity. For every Christian who has taken seriously his Lord's purpose of world redemption feels a tension, social, intellectual and spiritual, in his endeavor to realize that purpose in the life of our time. And this tension can only be relieved in one of two ways.

It can be relieved if Christ and his gospel are walled off from the age, embalmed in creeds so antiquarian, in ceremonies so anesthetic and quieting, in aspirations so other-worldly, that the secular paganism of our day will be able to appropriate the soothing elements of our religion without moral irritation. At the present moment this is the road that the Christian church is greatly tempted to take. It does not now take its own gospel of world redemption seriously. It has been overawed by the vastness of the universe. It has been baffled by the complexities of civilization. It has been confused by scholarship. It has been made contented by its own prosperity. It is preoccupied with its "activities." Instead of thinking of world redemption, it is tremendously concerned with holding on to what it has. It has been interested in the defense of its resources, material and human, and of inherited statements of faith, rather than in the conquest of a new and difficult age. It is greatly tempted to settle down and dig itself in as a religion of escape from a world which has overwhelmed it. In this way Christianity may avoid the necessity of becoming heroic.

There are still many Christians, however, who are not interested in this kind of religion. If modern civilization be represented by a motor car, then we may say that these Christians are interested in the association of religion with the engine and the steering gear rather than with the upholstery. They want a religion which gives power and direction to the everyday life of men and not a religion which simply makes people comfortable who neither know nor care where their world is going. These followers of Christ find no relief for the tension of their souls in a church which is absorbed in esthetic adornment while its Lord walks up the highway of civilization to new crucifixions. Their peace is of another kind. It is the peace which comes when one accepts the fact, once for all, that the Christian must "live dangerously." It is the peace of the commander who has finally brought his foe to battle, of the physician who has at last succeeded in making a diagnosis. It is the peace of Jesus on that last night. "My peace I give unto you"—a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. It is the peace of conflict and of the happy warrior, a peace that indeed "passeth understanding."

The Heroic Tradition

I have called the Christianity of these followers of Christ a heroic Christianity because it embodies the central elements of the heroic tradition. Professor Gilbert Murray has pointed out that the fundamental notes of the classical Greek drama were the notes of love, strife, death and the triumph over death. The "hero," the central figure in the drama, had two characteristics. He stood in the midst of the strife. He accepted the suffering. This quality we have preserved in our phrase "heroic remedy." And the hero endured the conflict and won through it by virtue of the fact that he was able to identify himself with some power which seemed more than human. This more-than-human power which the hero discovered to his inspirit-

ng and development is suggested by the descriptive phrase from the fine arts, "heroic size."

A heroic Christianity will indeed accept the fact that strife is its portion. It will find also, we dare to believe, that it can only endure that strife through the deepening of its own appreciation of the more-than-human power revealed in Christ. "This commandment have we from him."

He is indeed the author of the strife. It is he who has produced the tension in our souls and he alone can release us from its vast distractions. If we could only find him again. And where shall we find him? Out on the highway of our civilization, bearing his cross. Look for a man with a cross. And perhaps when we see him and draw near to him we shall have that experience which Countee Cullen describes by words which he puts on the lips of Simon the Cyrenian.

He never spoke a word to me,
And yet he called my name,
He never gave a sign to me,
And yet I knew and came.

At first I said, "I will not bear
His cross upon my back;
He only seeks to place it there
Because my skin is black."

But he was dying for a dream,
And he was very weak,
And in his eyes there shone a gleam
Men journey far to seek.

It was himself my pity bought;
I did for Christ alone
What all of Rome could not have wrought
With bruise of lash or stone.

Such is the power of the "man with a cross." It seems at first sight utter weakness. But those who join his quest for the Kingdom of Love find their souls strangely at peace as they share his burden.

A Better Hope

By W. T. McElveen

There is introduced a better hope. Hebrews 7:19.

CHRISTIANITY introduces men to "a better hope." The old Jewish religion was a religion of hope, but the new Christian religion brings to men a better hope. The unknown author of this epistle to the Hebrews is comparing Judaism and Christianity. In every particular he insists that Christianity is the more excellent religion. "Better" is the word which he uses with frequency. That word, better, is the key word of the epistle. In brief, this is the insistence of the epistle. Christ is immeasurably better than Moses. The gospel is immensely better than the old law. Christ's sacrifice on Calvary's hill is infinitely better than all the animal sacrifices offered on the old Jewish day of atonement. The old religion was symbol and prophecy; the new religion is reality and fulfillment. The old religion had become static; Christianity was dynamic, full of unused energies and unspent vitality. By other comparisons that would mean much to people who had been Jews and who were beginning to be Christians, the author shows that Christianity is the vastly superior religion. It is the more excellent way.

One splendid feature of Judaism was that it looked forward expectantly. It was alive with glorious anticipations for coming days. The Jew foresaw the better day. The Hebrew was not retrospective, but anticipative. His leaders believed in progress and sought to hasten it. The old prophets ever expressed the thrilling feeling that the passing years were moving toward some grand consummation, and that something better was going to blossom on the stalks of the approaching centuries than ever grew upon the stalks of previous centuries. Jeremiah is often mistakingly pictured as a prophet of despair and doom. The Jews of his day had sinned repeatedly, inexcusably and horribly. As a punishment their capital city was demolished; their beautiful temple burned, their nation broken in pieces and the best people taken as captives to foreign lands. The destruction was terrible, but Jeremiah is quick to say that it was not annihilatory. "In seventy years," Jeremiah prophesied, "God will restore the Jewish people to their own land and begin again the task of making that people a nation that could serve him and the world." And in every chapter after his description of the merited destruction Jeremiah expressed an ever bolder and more exuberant hope. Instead of being a weeping prophet, Jeremiah was a genius for hoping. That was true of the other prophets. They believed and said that passing time was leading up to something grander than they could describe. Past and present defeats, they declared, did not mortgage that future victory. They saw "hope in ill success" and trusted that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill." Indeed, they insisted that the darkest defeat may be the beginning of a great victory as the lowest ebb is the turn of the tide.

"Prisoners of Hope"

In the decadent time in which Jesus lived the really spiritual Jews were expectant. The aged Simeon and Hannah "waited for the consolation of Israel." Joseph of Arimathea "waited for the kingdom of God." They expected a messiah. Judaism was a religion of hope. The first page of the great record that it gave to mankind of God's dealings with men gives the promise that "the seed of a woman shall crush the serpent's head." When the times were dark this Old Testament declared that in the eventime it shall be light. Zachariah told the Jewish exiles that they were "prisoners of hope." At many a period in the history of Jews there were chronic growlers who thought and said that the Jewish civilization would collapse. But the real leaders of the Jews were men of splendid hopes.

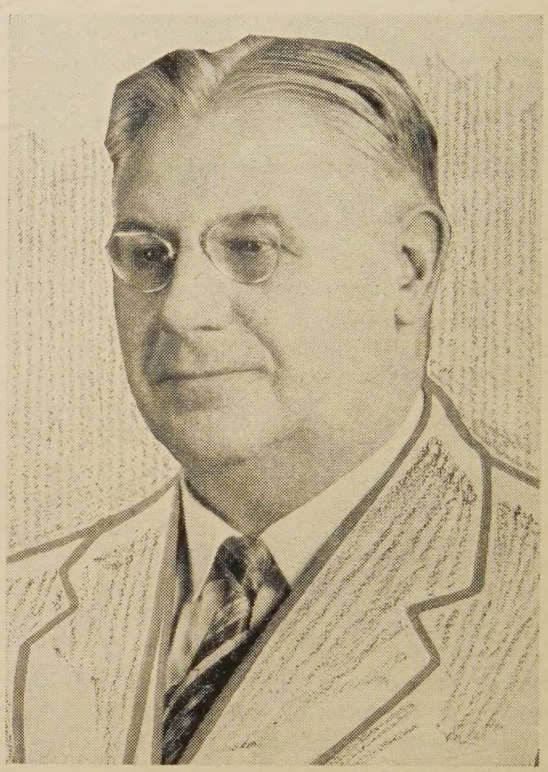
This unknown author tells the Jewish Christians that Christianity introduces them to a better hope. The authorized version reads: "Christianity brings in a better hope." We have not the time to particularize

the many items that make up this larger, deeper, richer Christian hope. Let us be content with mentioning the outstanding features of Christianity's more confident hope. First, Christ gave very clear ideas of God, the Father, as generous, gracious, solicitous, saving, wooing, winning love. The Jews thought of God as the father of their nation, but only very rarely did they liken God to a father who cared for individuals. Second, Christ gave very definite ideas of a much more many sided salvation than that which the Old Testament describes: a salvation that not only conquers sin, disease and death, but builds men up in the perfection and completion that is in God. Third, Christ gave men the sure hope of immortality. In the Old Testament the idea of personal immortality is scarcely glimpsed. Even the great prophets were content to believe in the perpetuity of their nation, but not in the everlastingness of the individual. Jesus brought immortality out of dimness into the light. Fourth, Jesus redefined, revised and universalized many of the ideas of the Jews, giving to these ideals new and richer meaning and thus lodging in them more solacing comfort and more transforming energy. He insisted that his disciples must excel the righteousness of the scribes and the pharisees. They must do "more than others." Christianity is an enabling religion. Truly, Christianity introduces a better hope.

Hope and Faith

Christianity declares that we are "saved by hope." It also declares that we are "saved by faith." There is no contradiction. Hope and faith are twin sisters. They always cooperate. Christianity declares that God is a "God of hope." Our confidence in ourselves lags a long way behind God's confidence in us. He expects much more from man than man can yet imagine. The apostle says that a man "without hope" is a man "without God," and urges us "to abound in hope." The hope that Christianity introduces to men is not a Pollyanna buoyancy, or exuberant good spirits; it is the conviction that all fine ideals will become realities, the assurance that God lives and works in men and in his world, and that we may cooperate with him in making progress. You need no preacher to tell you that he who loses heart always loses in the game of hearts and in every other worth while game. Expectation is the nerve of endeavor. If you don't believe you will succeed, you won't. Despair is demoralizing; hope is inspiring. Doubt is debilitating; hope is energizing. No croaker can gain admission to the kingdom of heaven, or contribute anything toward its development.

We live in a day of financial depression, moral decadence and religious doubt. Many voices of despair challenge the voice of faith. Pessimism was greatly increased and diffused by the world war. Prior to the midsummer of 1914 it did seem as if mankind was making progress in many directions. We had come to think that the many international, educational, scientific and religious organizations had created so much good will and understanding between the nations that another big war was impossible. Socialists hailed men of different races and nations as "comrades," and declared that "comrades" would never shoot each othe down in national combat. But a shot was fired tha was heard round the world and war, the biggest wa of all history, began. The march into Belgium wa not the march of progress. Millions of lives were sac rificed, billions of treasure wasted, beautiful cities an fair fields ruined, and Europe was in chaos. Ther came the Versailles treaty that breathed fear, greed suspicion and revenge. And there are still dissension between the conquerors and the conquered. So, not withstanding the enormous suffering and waste of tha



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terrible war, the chances for real peace are still precarious. Spite of the league of nations, world courts and Paris peace pacts, war mentality shows but few signs of abatement. Many politicians and some statesmen still believe that war is inevitable. The Christian law "to love your enemies" is ignored by even great nations. The obsolete Mosaic requirement of "an eye for an eye" still governs many with its sinister insistence. Our troubled race sorely needs Christianity to introduce to it the better hope.

God Is Ignored

Then too, secularism is a too prevailing temper in our time. There is little popular inclination to attend the worship services of the church. God is not denied; he is just ignored. Splendid missionary causes are not as generously supported as they were. Since the armistice professional pugilism has grown in favor; foul films are frequently shown, and laws making for temperance and purity are but laxly enforced. Our economists seem to be impotent to solve the problems of our

basic industry, farming, and the more general problem of unemployment. Other tragic revelations of social and political incompetence and failure might be mentioned. As a consequence, some men have ceased to whistle to keep up their courage. They have begun to whine. They keenly need Christianity to introduce to them the better hope.

Some of our novelists and philosophers are speaking doleful words that add to the depression of the time. They seem to like to "sit in the seat of the scornful." Sometimes their pessimism is due to indigestion or a torpid liver. Sometimes the cynic's sneer is personal vanity putting on the airs of critical wisdom. Frustrated in their desire to gain public recognition, they become professional vinegar tasters, and tell us that the world is sour because of their wish to be considered clever. Some, of course, indulge in low spirits as a kind of intellectual luxury. H. L. Mencken looks with Olympian content on the vast majority of Americans whom he calls "yokels." Sinclair Lewis expresses his disdain for average folk by calling them "Babbitts." A. E. Wiggam, high priest of the cult of popularizing science, suggests that mankind is in a pitiful state because the majority of people are so "petty of caliber." A group of rather younger people, who call themselves the intelligentsia, prate about being emancipated from the prudish and provincial Victorian age. Dickens is impossible; Tennyson is too tame, and Browning is too sturdy in morals for them. They prefer the ofttimes vulgar D. H. Lawrence and the sometimes nasty Sherwood Anderson.

You recall how James M. Barrie, the Scottish novelist, wearied by these pessimists, whose eyes seem fashioned for small contempts, rebuked these "superficial smarties" in his play: "The Admirable Crichton." You recall the story of the play. A family whose members boasted of being in the smart set is wrecked on a desert island. They could wear fine clothes, talk silly chatter, play bridge, and criticize humbler people, but they couldn't make a fire out of doors or clean fish or cook food. On the desert island what they knew was useless. They would have starved to death had it not been for their resourceful butler. He alone had any knowledge of the common elementary tasks for sustaining life. So he became the executive leader of the group and so directed and did things that these superficial people lived in fair comfort and were eventually rescued. That ordinary butler, whom they despised, became their savior. Mencken and Lewis and Wigam may look with disdainful pity upon ordinary folk, but civilization exists and it improves in large measure because hewers of wood and carriers of water faithfully and skillfully do their work. Good loyal workmen, whether they be scavengers or school teachers, are the backbone of our industrial civilization. Abraham Lincoln said that God must have loved common people because he made so many of them.

"Diagnosing" the World

And some thinkers, whom we have regarded as high grade, overemphasize the diseases and disorders of civilization. Some months ago Oswald Spengler published a book with the title "The Downfall of the West," in which he prophesied the collapse of occidental civilization. Dean Inge writes so much about what he calls "the grave diseases of our body politic" that he is rightly called "the gloomy dean." A European economist recently published a book about "The Malady of Europe." And an American economist, not to be outdone by his European rival, writes an article on "The Malady of America." Anyone who reads the informing books and articles of Bertrand Russell knows how fond he is of the word "diagnosis." He is always diagnosing somebody or something. The world to him is a hospital, but he isn't even a hopeful physician. He sees no rhyme or reason, no discernible plan or purpose in human life. He has no religion, except that in the face of the approaching catastrophe of the world's end, to die manfully. This emphasis upon the sickness of society that is so popular among present day writers has percolated down into the minds of the people, lowered their vitality, devitalized their spirits and poisoned the moral atmosphere. They need Christianity to introduce to them the better hope.

God Is Not Defeated

Civilization is old. It has faced many crises. Its death has been prophesied many times. It has weathered more tempestuous gales than it is now experiencing. And it still carries on. Something pushes it or pulls it on. It has some kind of a "go" to it. Evidently, its chief trait is not disease, but health. If it were as sick as some of these growlers say, it would have died long ago. But it is much better than it was. There is very much more goodness and sympathy and charity and helpfulness in the world than there was a thousand years ago or two thousand years ago. Civilization is not growing weaker with age, but stronger and more beneficent. Civilization is not like a ship laid up in dry dock for repairs; it is more like a great ocean liner that has many defects, but is driving through the storm as well as the sunshine at a commendable rate of speed. Where does civilization get this "go" which enables it to recover from economic ailments and which pushes it on? Part of this vitality may come from the momentum of the past. More of it comes from the healthy minded workers and earnest reformers of the present. But still more of it comes from education and yet more of it from religion. God is a great resident regenerating force in his world. He may be occasionally thwarted, but he is never permanently defeated.

Two little girls were trying to name the books of the New Testament. One said that the New Testament ends with the book of Timothy; the other insisted that the New Testament ends with the book of Revolutions. This gospel has created many revolutions in this world. There is plenty of dynamite in our religion, but we must tactfully utilize it. Practically every principle that Jesus enunciated has the power to cure society of all its diseases, but those principles need to be made operative. Christianity can always give to mankind the better hope. It can give you songs in the night.

If you have developed the habit of talking about the

vanity of life, or of boasting of your disillusionment, quit it. It was quite appropriate for the poet, Grey, to be melancholy over a graveyard. But civilization is neither a graveyard nor a morgue. It is the scene of a great divine drama. Engineers have been working upon the problem of how to make railroad engines burn up their own smoke. This world will be both a brighter and a better world if the groaners and complainers could learn to do that. Let the croakers be silent. Human society should devise some scheme to courtmartial every discourager. The world needs hope. Christianity can give the better hope. The God of hope can fill you with all joy in believing. Hope thou in God. He will create in you a lively hope. The heart that is not hopeful is not Christian. Dante wrote over the portals of inferno, "All ye who enter abandon hope." Paul wrote, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

The Intolerance of Christianity

By G. Ray Jordan

Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see God's realm unless . . . John 3:3 (*Moffatt*).

FOR a number of years now the popular subject for discussion among broad-minded religious people has been tolerance. The term has been used so much that it has become almost threadbare. So persistently has the idea been emphasized that many people believe that this is one of the essential features, if not the chief characteristic, of Christianity. As an inevitable result, the popular mind has come to judge Christianity as being rather indifferent in its attitude, especially in regard to its belief. Tolerance has become a matter of unconcern. Kindness and gentleness have been talked about so much that people think Christianity is unable or unwilling to insist upon anything in an uncompromising manner. Anybody who exalts a certain standard and says, "The world must come to this or it is not Christian," is considered a bigot. Hosts of religious leaders have permitted themselves to be lashed out of their places of authority by mere words. They do not care to be referred to as being obstinate, headstrong, dogmatic, or intolerant. So they will insist rigorously upon nothing.

But in spite of this state of affairs, Christianity, because of its very nature, does make some rigid, uncompromising demands. Simon Peter clearly stated this in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. St. Paul later enunciated these requisites with an unflinching boldness. These standards are not set up arbitrarily. There is a reason for every rule of adherence Christianity proposes. Its own intrinsic nature explains each demand it makes. The very self-respect which characterizes this religion suggests reasons for such attitudes as must be sustained. There are fundamentals in its teachings and spirit which cannot be evaded.

I

Strange as it may sound in this freedom-loving age of ours, Christianity is intolerant about its inherent mental viewpoint. It has to be. If there were nothing of vital significance or of lasting value about Christianity, it would not be necessary to insist on these basic matters. But there is a quality about Christianity and that quality is of abiding worth. There are some things which must be considered *sine qua non,* as far as Christianity is concerned.

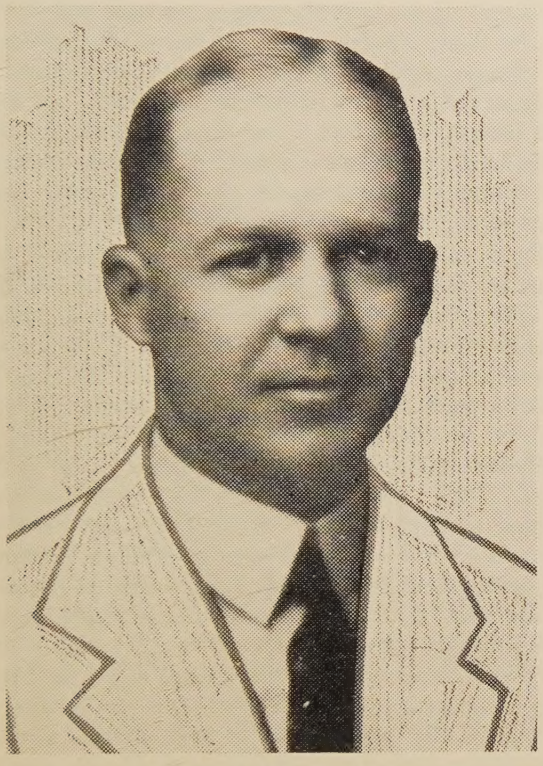
Its mental attitudes have to be treated in this list. Of course large liberty is allowed. It is not merely allowed; it is even demanded by Christianity. As a matter of fact, freedom to think is one of the very points upon which Christianity must insist. There can be no intellectual slavery or serfdom in the kingdom of Christ. This is one of the most important demands made by Christianity. Deep down in each mind is a desire for truth. Christ says it is his will that we seek it. Since every person must be convinced for himself or herself, there can be no satisfactory course save that outlined by Jesus Christ. Truth must be placed foremost and the prerogative of each individual to discover it for himself is indispensable. In his "Aids to Reflection," Coleridge wrote: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than the truth will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." Exactly! Truth must be given the place of preeminence. But that is precisely the place Jesus accorded it! This demand is part of the very essence of Christianity.

Yet, while all of this is evident and must be kept clear before all of our minds, it is entirely too easy to overlook the obligation which inevitably follows. In Christianity there is no possibility for an indifferent attitude on the part of one who has discovered truth. The discoverer of truth is responsible. He must accept and follow every bit of the truth he sees. You cannot treat facts in a haphazard, indifferent manner. At least you cannot do that and be a Christian. One must be willing to dedicate himself uncompromisingly to all the truth he sees. Any so-called tolerance about this matter is not real tolerance; it is mental dishonesty. And no one can be a Christian unless honor is a part of his very nature. Truth makes certain demands. Truth must be acted upon. That is the reason, when the multitude, listening to Simon Peter's message and being convinced of its truth, cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter immediately said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins."

Further than this, however, Christianity demands that every adherent be such a lover of truth that he or she will forever be an eager searcher for more truth. This is a requisite which cannot be escaped; and it signifies much for certain people who have been calling all religious leaders bigots.

Here are a group of so-called scientists who have disclaimed all interest in Christianity, because, they say,

Christians are so dogmatic. Well, there have been a great many foolish statements made by some professed followers of Christ. But Jesus did not talk like a bigot! Further than this, and more penetrating as far as these men are concerned, is the dynamic fact that no one can confine himself to one narrow field of truth if he is a genuine lover of truth. He must seek for this mental treasure in every way and everywhere he can. Thus those people who falsely accuse Christianity of dogmatism are themselves mentally warped when they refuse to search for and discover religious facts. All



G. Ray Jordan

truth belongs to God, and truth is universal. Jesus does demand that every Christian eagerly seek, and then act on all truth! Christianity is intolerant about honesty and fair-mindedness. These virtues are absolutely required by Christ!

But, again, while it is true that any person can accept only what he sees to be true, ultimately the Christian will come to believe that there is a God and that he is thoroughly Christlike. This is an indispensable belief. Christianity does not permit any other interpretation to be made—any other understanding of God's character to be accepted. There is just one God and he is like Jesus Christ. So speaks this religion. The Deity is not capricious, unfriendly, or irresponsible. He is worthy of all the trust that man can give. Christianity insists on a belief of this nature. That is to say, though one is given time to come to it, ultimately he must reach this kind of mental judgment if he becomes a Christian.

II

Christianity is also intolerant in the realm of morals and ethics. The approved reaction to the laxness of present-day morals is one of unconcern. The dilettante smiles at the necessity of taking things seriously; and this trifler is a popular citizen of today. He seems to hold sway in many circles.

But Christianity is not indifferent toward morals. Indeed, it is intolerant in its demand of right attitude toward morality. In spite of all the different opinions we have and all the thoughtless discussion going on in popular magazines and books, there is a clear-sounding note and Christianity strikes it. The highest and the purest, the altogether honest and righteous, is demanded by Christianity. Nothing else is in order; nothing else is acceptable. While many people are saying that morals are only customs, *mores,* Christianity declares with rigid insistence that purity is a reality, and an absolute requisite. "Blessed are the pure in heart." So spoke Jesus. And he went on to add some other things which are rather cutting for this age of false liberty, but which are still needed. Hear him! "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

There have been some who thoroughly understood and appreciated the exacting demands of Christianity. There are those now who so understand the rigid insistence of the principles of Jesus. They will not permit themselves to be smirched by the grime of low and sordid social relationships.

No man or woman who is a Christian can be unethical. And, should someone say, "Ah, but there are many systems of ethics," then the answer is that there is only one Christian system. Should someone still say that he does not understand which is the correct rule. Christianity demands, in the meantime, that he live up to the very highest that he knows, with the prayer that further light be constantly given. This is the matter about which Christianity is intolerant. There is no compromise possible. The Golden Rule, moreover, with all of its implications, can be understood by the eager and earnest searcher for knowledge!

Christianity is intolerant about the matter of loyalty to conscience. There can be no compromise here. After Pentecost those disciples who once had vacillated stood like Gibraltar. Hear Peter and John, after they had been arrested and warned not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus: "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard."

John Bunyan thoroughly understood Christ's demand for fidelity to conscience. He feared for his family when he faced punishment, more than for himself. To part with his wife and little ones, as he says, was "as the pulling of the flesh from my bones." The

appeal of his blind child, who was "nearer my heart than all I had besides," was gripping in its power. "Oh, the thought of the hardships my blind one might go under will break my heart to pieces." Nevertheless he was sustained all during his arrest and trial. He was loyal to the integrity of his conscience!

No Christian can forget that the line of duty is great, and the course of Christianity is one of duty. Every Christian must be a partisan of the straight line. It is impossible to be intolerant about crookedness! The high level of the rigid teachings of Jesus, coming to clear-cut expression in the Sermon on the Mount, presents a standard, below which no Christian can dare live his life. At one place on the arrival of his train, a great crowd gathered to hear Gandhi. The Indian philosopher, who has never formally accepted Christ but who lives so constantly in the Master's spirit, took out a New Testament, read the beatitudes, and then finished by saying: "That is my address to you. Act upon it." This was all the speech he made, but what volumes it contained! In the Sermon on the Mount there is vividly portrayed the uncompromising standard of Christ.

III

Again, Christianity is intolerant about the matter of personal values. One cannot be a Christian and prefer *things* of any kind—business, money, or any material matter—to *people*. That is what Edwin Markham says in his "Man-Making":

We all are blind until we see
That in the human plan
Nothing is worth the making if
It does not make the man.

Why build these cities glorious
If man unbuilded goes?
In vain we build the work, unless
The builder also grows.

Such a philosophy of life necessitates interest and concern for all those with whom one lives. Christianity is not indifferent in regard to the matter of selfishness and unselfishness—in business, in industry or in any phase of personal or social life! The Christian must care for, be interested in, and do all in his power to help all mankind.

.....all men are my kin,
Since every man has been
Blood of my blood,
I glory in the grace
And strength of every race
And joy in every trace
Of brotherhood.

No Christian can build a fence around himself and family and shut out the rest of the world! That's the reason that Pharisee of the Pharisees, Saul of Tarsus, had to tramp all over the Roman world, preaching to, teaching and loving people of all colors and races! He had been baptized with the Holy Spirit, who said: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." That is the reason that, after Pentecost, Christianity could not be confined within the boundaries of Palestine.

Christianity is rigidly insistent about the kind of character one has. There is only one kind permissible: that is the genuine Christian nature. There may be large liberty about how every person cultivates his character. Certainly there is ample freedom as to one's intellectual interpretations; but there is no compromise in regard to the demand about what result is expected! Increasingly Christianity insists that every Christian resemble Christ, in attitude, spirit and quality of life.

That is what St. Paul knew when he wrote: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal . . . love seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked . . . love never faileth . . . now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Only a genuine Christian—one baptized in the Spirit of Jesus Christ—could have written those words!

"I'm studying religion," we hear someone say. Again we say, "We are glad to hear it. But do not stop on the way or it will be dangerous. Do not jump at conclusions or you will land in error. Take all the facts of all the sciences—physical sciences, but also the human sciences—before you pass judgment. Think your way through to the end and we will be willing to trust your conclusion. For you must needs end in the truth." We do not object to Christ being subjected to the most exacting analysis—his character, his teaching, his deeds. What we do object to is a shallow examination which passes for scientific study. We do not fear the outcome of a thoroughgoing investigation of the bases of ethics. We resent a study which includes only part of the facts, or a smattering idea of all the facts, or an exaggeration out of all proportion of a portion of the facts. Our age is good at such surface studies. Study of the institution of marriage frequently gets no farther than Judge Lindsey's observance of widespread promiscuity. Study of psychology gets no farther than dreams or the inferiority complex. Study of the church ends with the discovery of hypocrites in its fold. Study of religion gets no farther than crudity or credulity.

Investigation, questioning, examination are methods one uses to arrive at truth. Truth, not investigation, is the destination. Our age, enamoured of its scientific equipment for investigation, may yet prove to be one of the most important contributors to the progress of the race, provided its study goes far enough and continues long enough to reach definite conclusions. We are in the midst of one of the most significant revolutions in human thought, none the less significant merely because it is a silent, bloodless revolution. One phase of this revolution is the new theology in the process of making, a theology that will meet the needs of modern men, harmonize with the new knowledge, and utilize the methods of science. Evidences for this are abundant. We submit, willingly submit, the Bible, the church, Christ, the creeds, to scientific examination. We say, "Dissect them, put them to your laboratory tests, the very acid test itself. And we are willing to abide by the outcome, provided that you keep on with

your testing until you reach a definite conclusion, until you reach truth." And we know full well that there is no such thing as truth which is not based on all the facts, and a critical understanding of all the facts.

IV

Another very important thing to be said, and said with a generous measure of emphasis, is that once truth has been arrived at it should be applied to life. The purpose of seeking truth is not primarily to satisfy the mind but to enrich life. "May knowledge be increased; may life be enriched," is the motto of the University of Chicago. Increase of knowledge is sought that life may be enriched. Truth is not something to which we merely give mental assent but that on which we base living. It is not something to be held in a vacuum, but to be put into action in the common ways of life. Unless a man is willing, once he believes he has found the truth, to begin to live by it and its social implications, the truth degenerates into a lifeless theory.

A great many religious beliefs are purely abstract. Much of our religious discussion reminds us of a college debate. In a formal debate one argues for the purpose of outwitting his opponents. Frequently in our state high school contests a team is expected to be ready at a moment's notice to defend equally well both sides of a question. Often he is accounted the shrewdest debater who can, by a trick, confound or fluster his opponents and thus win the decision of the judges. Too much religious discussion has been pitched on this low plane. Our cherished doctrines of baptism and the Lord's supper are not always investigated with a view of finding a truth to live by, a truth which, if lived by, will make life more beautiful, more wholesome; but with a view to outwitting the man whose beliefs are different from our own.

It is highly important to work out, at expense of time and labor, a philosophy of life. And a man's genuine philosophy of life is his religion. But a religion is designed to be lived. If it cannot be lived, it is a set of theoretical propositions which are worthless. In reality, an unlivable religion cannot be termed the truth.

One of our most pressing problems is that of living while we are working out our explanation of things. While we are searching for the truth we must needs be living by the truth. I may wish to first engage in an investigation of whether honesty is desirable, or whether justice and kindness and purity are valid principles of conduct, before putting them into use. But each day I come face to face with the necessity of either being kind or unkind, pure or impure, just or unjust. The investigation of truth then becomes a pressing necessity. We cannot defer it too long, nor permit it to become too drawn out, because all the while we are being hourly challenged to live a certain type of life, based on the truth. My daily problem is to live well. Many theoretical questions can wait, must wait; but I cannot, except at great risk, wait too long to decide which type of life to choose.

The significance of Jesus in the realm of religion is found just at this point. He made religion identical with, coterminous with, life. The central Christian doctrines are practical life-principles. They aid in living, in producing an abundant, healthy, happy, rich life. Whatever is not in some way related to life is not worth critical examination, submitting to a rigid examination. The church should, any man can wisely follow Jesus here. There is a whole mass of ecclesiastical and theological doctrines that have little practical bearing. Men will theorize about them until old age and die without having made a satisfactory formulation. But about the elements that go into our social relationships and our personal values no such uncertainty can safely be allowed, albeit there must be going on always a constant reconstruction of one's formulation even of the most practical principles of life. Christianity may well be investigated; yea, it must be. But it should be investigated for the purpose of living whatever truth may emerge from the investigation. One cannot be forever getting ready to live, in other words. He must at some stage, and that as early as possible, say, "Now, at this moment, I begin to live the type of life called Christian."

I have a life in Christ to live;
  But till I live it must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
  To this and that book's date?

I have a life in Christ to live,
  I have a death in Christ to die;
But must I wait till science give
  All doubts a full reply?

Persuaded of Reality

By Frederick W. Norwood

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39.

I.

IF WE could only believe that perfect love is at the heart of everything, how happy we should be! The belief would round off life with a great assurance. It would answer to all the noblest of which our being gives witness. It would fulfill our dearest dreams of heaven. Perfect love would offer an adequate goal and issue in perfect bliss.

If we could be assured of the goal we should not be unduly impatient concerning many difficulties by the way. Something of hardship, something of adventure, something of peril, something of severe testing would be altogether tolerable if only we never lost the assurance that they would not separate us from the ultimate and complete love of God. We might even go as far as St. Paul and welcome tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword if, like him,

we could keep hold of this fundamental conviction that nothing could separate us from the love of God.

This belief is the declared content of our religion, but it is desperately hard to hold. It comes to us in flashes with long periods of darkness in between. Indeed it is a wonder that any man can hold it at all.

For love is the costliest of all graces, the most exposed of all articles of faith. It is easier to believe almost anything of life, or of mankind, or of nature, or of God, than the supremacy of love. That which we most desire to believe is by far the most difficult to believe. It may be possible for rhapsodizing pantheists and poets, but for ordinary men and women it seems divorced from at least some grim and irreconcilable facts. Nothing makes us more angry and bitter at times than the contrast between religious teaching concerning love and the actual practice of it in the world.

Love Complicates

Besides, love does not simplify life; it complicates it. One feels it would be much harder to live in a world where love was universally acknowledged than in the world as it is. Living as we do, with the principle of love only operative in very restricted circles, it is easy to forget or to feel no responsibility for all manner of things beyond them. But if the obligations of love were universal, the strain of doing justice and loving mercy would be unthinkably great.

Our love is scarcely to be distinguished from partiality. We love certain people, and for their sakes will endure a great deal. But that often makes us unfair to those against whom our loved ones are contending. In the case of a group of conflicting personalities, how easy to take sides with those for whom we have affection; how difficult to preserve good will or even tolerance for those in opposition. In the great war the spirit of fraternal good will within our own nation reached for a time its zenith, but how terribly the horizon of our patriotism was edged with bitter hate for the hostile people beyond it! In that day love that was not partial was esteemed as treason. It was unreasonable, subversive, intolerable and, in the rare cases where it was shown, it led direct to the jail.

Universal love, we trust, may be possible for God, but for us mortals, instead of simplifying life, it would complicate it to the limits of endurance.

Again, we all know that sorrow and anxiety are not mitigated because we love some who are near to us. When love comes into the heart, sorrow puts its foot in the door and prevents it being shut again. We suffer most on account of those whom we love most.

Love and Sorrow

In fact, love increases the sorrow and pain and perplexity of the world. That is why we instinctively guard ourselves against its encroachments, reserving for it only certain very limited objects and selected persons. One may well ask—and indeed we do all ask—why should we love at all? Multitudes do, consciously or unconsciously, guard themselves against it, though all the while they crave it, seek it passionately in their own enclosed preserves, and feel angry if they do not find it.

In addition, love confronts us with things which are amazingly difficult to explain. I would almost say they are beyond explanation. If God is love, why are there a thousand things just as they are? Some time or other there comes to every one of us most poignant suffering which is not due to lack of love but to its very presence. Every fiber in our being cries out that some stroke of fate is cruel, cruel, and we ask ourselves how we can trust a power, if it exists at all, which in this case shows itself so deaf to the most elementary and legitimate and sacred of our longings and our prayers?

This is how we poor mortals do actually live. One would think that seeing we are made as we are, we would at least have sympathy with one another, whatever we might think of nature or of God! If it worked out that way—and it ought to work out that way—that might indeed be part of its explanation. It does in fact frequently work out that way; there is much more love in the world due to sympathy than to any other cause whatever. Our word "sympathy," though it merely means "fellow-feeling," has almost always a bias toward suffering. We seldom sympathize with the successful. The ultra-fortunate are generally lonely and little loved. Sorrow, more than joy, creates the spirit of fellowship.

This is not a sufficient explanation of the sorrow of the world, though it does go some distance along the road. In the main, an established belief in the supremacy of love is the most difficult article of faith. Perhaps there is no other article which profoundly matters.

II.

What are we going to do about it all?

We live in a world of mysterious antagonisms, but if we are going to live at all, we must try to keep our footing with some notion of which side we are really fighting for.

I said that the problem of suffering is virtually unexplainable. There is surely no complete explanation for us as men. It ought to be said now that neither can the problem be explained away. If one has no faith at all, still the problem of suffering remains, and so also does the mysterious yearning to love and to be loved. They both follow man everywhere, through all ages, and cannot be left behind.

I can think of only three attitudes of mind towards the problem of the world's evil. I think I can attach names to them out of history, though the names are not always used. In a complex world we rarely systematize our thought or attach definite labels to our theories, but tendencies may be recognized though they are not named.

For the sake of clear thinking I will name them. I will name them the Epicurean, the Stoical and the Christian.

A man may be an Epicurean without ever having heard the word. He may be partly an Epicurean and partly a Stoic and partly a Christian, for we get our attitudes confused during our confusing lives. But it seems to me we have got to do something about the reality of sorrow, and I can only think of three main attitudes towards it.

The first I call the Epicurean, which for our purposes may be defined negatively as the policy of avoiding suffering whenever you can, and on the positive side by cultivating pleasure and pleasures, making them, if you are wise, as dainty and refined as possible. Such a man may evolve a considerable excellence of character. He may not merely run away from suffering but neutralize it by philosophy and self-restraint. He may learn to avoid gross pleasures and become an exquisite, daintily selecting the most beautiful or the most satisfying kinds. In the main, however, his policy is to leave things as they are, but to take out of them the

Frederick W. Norwood

best he can find. We have all a touch of the Epicurean about us.

The second attitude is that of the Stoics. It is to look upon suffering and evil as fancies or prejudices, to bring one's mind to bear upon them, to deny them and to cultivate self-sufficiency and aloofness. Here again is something quite admirable in its way. Much of it may be practiced by everyone with advantage. But its cardinal idea is not to give full weight to the evils of life but to minimize them by being sufficient to one's self and by standing apart. There is something of the Stoic about every competent man and woman. Here is the root idea of many modern cults—by mental and spiritual forces to minimize the weight of life's pressing ills.

But what of Christianity?

You know at once that it has quite other ideas in its heart. These ideas have become part of our mental life. We have not been even nominally Christian for fifteen centuries for nothing. We may be very slack—perhaps particularly slack just now—but we have a cultural heritage which is still holding. Indeed, it is so pervasive that even if our institutions were to crumble it would still permeate our philosophy and conduct.

The Cross Idea

We have got the idea of a cross planted deeply in our minds. It is our most sacred symbol of redemption, though our dogmatic interpretations of it have grown indistinct.

We do know that, every now and again, at least, a man should cheerfully shoulder for himself a cross. We do not despise the man who willingly makes a sacrifice, whether he be a scientist, a doctor, an author, a statesman, a soldier, a missionary, a clergyman, or a philanthropist. In our heart of hearts we give to such people the palm or laurel wreath. Has it struck you how scarce these types are in non-Christian lands, even when you remember that today non-Christian lands are permeated by this influence?

We do know the essence of Christianity is the giving of self and love. The very qualities which nature herself does not teach we have given the supreme place of honor in our thought, even if not in our practice. Whenever we long for improvement in the world we are really hoping that such men and women will arise. If that subtle "new paganism" with the thousand elusive hues and forms, that error so dear to all overripe and blasé civilizations which has appeared in our time, should oust Christianity from the field, do we not know that we should be evacuating positions it has taken centuries to win?

Pray God that whatever may happen to institutional Christianity this effluence from its spirit may endure, that evil is to be fronted with sacrifice, with self-donation and with love!

Indeed, it is just in this way that Christianity did overcome the power of Greece and Rome in fair fight. It was simply, as one has said, "by exhibiting a Life and lives—the Life of the Crucified, and lives which continually re-live, in their endless various lesser degrees and ways, such a combination of gain in giving and of joy in suffering that she gave to souls the faith and strength to grasp life's nettle."

We need it back again, not changed, but renewed at its heart. That is our greatest and indeed our only need!

III.

But I want to add something else. I am thinking just now, not of the duty of living sacrificially, but of the answer which it gives to the problem of pain. The amazing thing is that we all are ready to acknowledge the duty even if we shirk it. We say, "I know I ought to," and then excuse ourselves. But why ought we? If the existence of suffering shakes our faith in God and spoils our pleasure in the world, why should the voluntary acceptance of suffering we could avoid improve the situation? We may say it would improve it for "others," but why should others have a claim upon us? Is it not they, or some of them, who cause most of our own suffering? If pain and suffering are evils, why should we increase the sum of them by putting ourselves in the way of much that otherwise would pass us by?

Here is where it seems to me at least that we come in touch with a Reality beyond ourselves. We appear to be haunted men and women—haunted by something beyond ourselves, something which nature does not teach us or the facts of life make easy.

Why do we feel shocked and outraged by the scandal of the world's pain? Why do we persist in acting, with great cost, in the belief that love and devotedness are the greatest things we know? Why do we keep on seeking for the truth? Why is untruthfulness so very odious? Something less than the truth is nearly always more convenient than the whole truth. Why cannot we sit down and be at home with lies? Perhaps we do, often enough, but we are ashamed if we are exposed; we have contempt for others whom we ourselves expose; we usually contrive to bluff ourselves into unconsciousness of our falsehood in order that we may be comfortable. Why do we feel bound to love, and ache to be loved? Why do we feel better when we love, and supremely happy when we are worthily loved?

Who or what keeps pulling at us? Why cannot we be let alone? But then, indeed, we do not want to be let alone. If it were once made finally certain that there was no truth or love anywhere in the universe and therefore we need not bother any more about their obligations, we know very well that we should feel we had been betrayed. To be shut up within our own purely subjective impressions and fancies, with no responsibility outside ourselves—that would give us the keenest suffering of which we are capable. No sane man would wish for it!

The Reality Outside Us

Then something other than ourselves is pulling at us. There is a Reality outside ourselves which will not let us go. If not, then precisely what is admittedly greatest, most precious and most significant in our souls and in the world is the most utterly rootless and unreasonable.

If once you call that Reality—God, then a shaft of light falls upon your pathway. Incidentally you have an explanation of Christ and Christianity. We call Christ divine in the last analysis because he did not avoid pain and sorrow, nor render himself immune by self-sufficingness and aloofness, but fronted it, took it upon himself, and actually made of it an evangel. He brought into the world its deepest insight into sorrow and pain and evil; and the richest enforcement of the fact that in spite of all, God *is,* and that he is good and loving.

It is all wonderful and yet we know in our soberest or even most cynical moments, that only in this way can the world be redeemed or life made noble and satisfying.

For it is not only that the somber things of life are mitigated, or that they can be utilized, or transformed or even transcended, but the sweet things of life are enriched. Love is pain, but it is not all pain. Only to it are the sweetest and the grandest things possible. To reject its claims is to shut ourselves up in prison. Love may be purgatory, but lovelessness is hell. Even at the worst, the poet strikes a true note when he says, "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." And at the best, the fields are spangled with flowers amid which lovers walk, but which loveless eyes cannot even see. A mother's love is not simply her love but, in the first instance, God's love, with just some drops of it fallen into the mother's heart. To heal the sick, or comfort the sad, or release the captive, or reclaim the lost, is on your side of it to have fellowship with the Divine. Because He is Love and Lover, we cannot let love go!

That is the meaning of Christianity. We know, we *must* know, that there is a Reality beyond ourselves which pulls at us, urging something better. We have to slip a long way down before we lose consciousness of that pull. Christianity names that "pull"—"God the Father." To be aware of that pull, to esteem it divine and to yield to it, is the root idea in the Christian faith. To be utterly persuaded of it, and to march with it instead of being merely tugged at by it, is the Christian faith at its zenith of assurance and triumph. "The creation," says St. Paul, "waits with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed."

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

When Matthew Stood Up

By B. Z. Stambaugh

He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. Matthew 9:9.

I CAN see him there, in his little booth facing the lake front, humped over his account books—the little, hooked-nosed Matthew Levi, tax-gatherer of Capernaum in Galilee. The crowds come and go. The water ripples and sparkles on the sand. The white clouds sweep across the sky. The boats sail along the horizon, and come aground at the beach before his door. But Levi sees nothing except the columns of figures under his nose. The fishermen spread out their nets, and gather in groups with the townspeople, gossiping, disputing, neighboring. But Levi is not a part of the life about him. His mind is on his business.

An unusually noisy group approaches, coming from the town. A shadow falls across the page on which he has been adding figures, and a voice calls him—"Matthew Levi, I have come for thee. Follow thou me." There is a laugh from the crowd. They nudge each other and laugh again. But, to their amazed consternation, Matthew Levi rises to his feet, gazes into the eyes of the Nazarene leader of this group, drops his stylus and papyrus rolls, and says, "I am coming."

It really is an amazing thing which is recorded here. As we consider it in the light of our own knowledge of human nature, we are quite as astonished as were the other people of Capernaum, when they saw this grasping, scheming, tight-fisted, greedy publican—this grafter, this robber of the poor, this detestable money-grabber—announcing his intention to be a follower of the man who has said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." There isn't much of an explanation given. It is simply stated, in bare fact: He saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, follow me. And he arose, and followed him. But I think, and I believe that you will agree with me, that there is a great deal behind what has been recorded. And I think, too, that there is a great deal which follows it, as well.

There he was, Matthew Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom. We infer from his name that this man belonged to the comparatively small, select group, whose birth made them eligible for priesthood and for the office of rabbi; and that, instead of becoming thus a leader of his people, he had hired himself out to the Romans and had become a tax-gatherer.

A Despised Tax-Gatherer

There is something colossal in the utter loathing with which the Jew of our Lord's time regarded the

A Pastoral Prayer

By James Dalton Morrison

ETERNAL God, our Father, never far from any one of us but most near when we most deeply feel our need of Thee, with Thy servant of old we confess that when in our distress we called upon Thee Thou didst hearken unto our cry and didst save us. Hear us as we call to Thee in the midst of the perplexing problems of these days. Thou hast set us in the midst of an age of science and hast endowed us with the inventive genius and the resources to build motors and dynamos and machines of every description, but lo, these things which we have made have suddenly become a menace to our peace and happiness. For while they have made work easier for some, they have deprived others of the opportunity to work at all. Give us insight and courage, we pray Thee, that we may be able to make the transition to a juster and more Christlikē social order, in which our inventions may release us not to idleness and unemployment but to the profitable use of our time in the higher service of mankind.

Help us to find our way to a more ethical and equitable distribution of the necessities of life. Thou knowest that today people hunger not because famine and plague have visited the land, but because there seems to be too much of everything. Children cry for bread because our granaries are too full, men lack clothes because the factories have made too much cloth, people are impoverished because the banks have too much money. Be merciful, O God, and deliver us, we pray Thee, from this poverty of plenty.

On behalf of the great multitudes of unemployed men and women in our own and in other lands, we cry to Thee. As they walk the city streets vainly seeking work or stand about in groups anxiously wondering what the morrow may bring, save them from bitterness and despair, from sloth and the demoralizing sins of idleness and want.

Bless the captains of industry during these trying times. Grant them an unusual portion of Thy grace for their unusual burdens. Give them vision and courage and faith, and the spirit that looks not merely to dividends but also to the good of the men who create the dividends.

Bless the President of the United States and the leaders of all other nations in their endeavors to find a way out of the valley of fear and depression into which the world has fallen. Help us to realize that as no man liveth unto himself, so we cannot hope to succeed save as we help others to succeed also. Forgive us that so long we have followed a policy of selfish isolation and help us now to bring to the solution of the world's anxious problems the power and influence which our favored position gives us.

Bless the social agencies which are called upon to meet unprecedented demands at this time. May they have the unselfish support of those who have more than enough, and in the distribution of aid grant them, we pray Thee, a double measure of insight and sympathy.

Bless Thy church in these anxious and troubled days, that she may speak words of truth and helpfulness. Without fear or favor may she call men back to the spiritual moorings from which they have drifted, bringing them to realize that true greatness consists not in the multiplication of machines and the increase of material wealth, but in the spread of the spirit of righteousness and truth. By the power of Thy Holy Spirit quicken the stifled conscience of an opulent generation that was beginning to feel that it had outgrown God and had no longer any use for religion. Help us, O Eternal Spirit, to see ourselves as we really are. We have boasted that we were rich and increased in goods and knew not that we were poor and naked and blind. And with this humbling revelation of ourselves may there come a new turning to Thee for light and leading, a new consecration of our gifts to Thy service, and, in the end, new heights of character, and, if we be found worthy to be trusted with it, a new and nobler era of prosperity than any that have gone before, an era in whose blessings all may share and in which the spirit of brotherhood may permeate all hearts, to the glory of Thy Holy name. Amen.

tax-gatherer. He looked upon him as a traitor to his country and to his religion. He refused to let him enter the synagogue, and barred him from all except the outer court of the temple. He was classed morally with the harlots and socially with the lepers.

And Matthew knew what the people thought of him, as he sat there, day after day, taking in the money from the fishermen, from the farmers, from the shepherds and the wine merchants, as fast as the military police could summon his victims. Yes, he knew what they thought, and he probably thought it himself. But he was making money hand over fist. He wasn't in it for his health. He cheated his own people and the government that hired him, and everybody knew it. That is why he grew hump-backed over his scrolls, and never looked up except with a furtive leer at his victims, as they came to fling down their money on his counter. He didn't want to see the life and fellowship about him, that he was missing. He didn't want to see the beauty of the sea and the sky that Jehovah had made. He had given up Jehovah. He had made his decision. There was nothing in life for him, now, but business—making money.

How well we today understand Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom! No, we are not dishonest—except in those minor forms of dishonesty that bear the stamp of public approval—such as making tax returns and damage claims—and we do not suffer the dislike of our neighbors. But what a vast number of us do know that Matthew Levi experienced, when he sacrificed his higher spiritual possibilities in order to make more money! You and I who have been baptized into the fellowship of the kingdom of heaven, have had the possibility of a high type of spiritual life. We are a part of the Body of Christ on earth. But, instead of fulfilling our opportunity as parts of the Light of the world and the salt of the earth, we have chosen to sit at the receipt of custom.

And for many of us, that is what life means. We narrow our horizon until we can see nothing but ourselves. We are spiritually round-shouldered with our petty interests. And here we sit at the receipt of custom, reaching out for the things of selfish enjoyment; clawing for money and the things it will buy; grasping at pleasure and power and success and fame. We have forgotten our neighbors. We have forgotten God.

Coming back to Matthew, however—how are we to explain what happened? "He arose, and followed him."

A Growing Friendship

I do not think that this was the first time Jesus had talked to Matthew. I have an idea that there had been many earlier conversations between these two. This astonishing Nazarene had often scandalized his friends by the kind of acquaintances he picked up, and I feel certain that he had come that way many times, and had seen that poor, lonely, disagreeable little publican. And you know what Jesus was bound to do under such circumstances: He went to him and asked him some questions—and probably got well rebuffed for his pains. But he didn't give up. Every time he passed, he said, "Good morning, Mr. Levi"—or whatever it was they said by way of greeting in ancient Galilee. And Matthew Levi probably snorted into his curly, black whiskers, and bent closer to his accounts.

But even Matthew could not help hear what Jesus said to others on the lake-side. He heard that preposterous doctrine—yes, we still treat it as preposterous—the doctrine of giving no thought to the morrow—the doctrine that it is more blessed to give than to

B. Z. Stambaugh

receive. Gradually the ice began to break. Here was a lunatic who apparently wanted to be friends with him, who didn't seem to hate him because he was a publican. I think Matthew began to wonder how it would seem, really, to have a friend, to have a truly respectable person for a friend. I fancy he began to expect the Teacher's visits—that he barked out a few questions, now and then, as he pondered the things Jesus said. And I think Jesus must have told him that he wanted him for one of his disciples.

Won by Nobility

By this time Matthew had become keenly conscious of the contrast between his own mean, shriveled soul and the nobility of Jesus. Yet Jesus wanted him for a friend and follower! Could it be that Jesus understood his possibilities of goodness better than he understood himself? And then the day came. Jesus said, "Matthew Levi, follow me." That brought Matthew to his feet. He looked into the eyes of Jesus, and this is what he read there: "Matthew, you are not made for graft and treachery. You haven't any business being an outcast. I know you better than you know

yourself. You are a member of the tribe of Levi, and the world ought to remember you as one who enriches mankind with a noble life." And Matthew, standing up, face to face with his Lord, was a different man—a new creature—from the publican humped over his account book.

I think that many of us are quite as impervious to the call of Christ as Matthew was. But the call has followed us all through out lives of selfishness. We know the love of God in the person of our Lord. We know the possibilities that he never forgets in us.

Right now it is the voice of Jesus Christ that speaks in the voice of the church: "Follow me!" If we will hear him, if we will no longer continue to sit absorbed in our selfish tasks, but will stand up on our feet and look into the eyes of Christ, he can give us a message and a power that will set us free from the slavery of greed and appetite; that will make us willing to leave all that, and follow him.

He does not call us all to leave business and industry in order to be clergymen or missionaries. But he calls us all to leave self out of our business, and to make our life work, whatever it may be, a means of blessing mankind and of giving ourselves, like Christ, to the world.

When God Is Not on Our Side

By Clarence E. Macartney

How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? Deuteronomy 32:30.

HERE Moses is writing prophecy as if it were history. He speaks of events in the future as one would of events that have already transpired. An inspired man has the right to do this. But all others should be sure they are inspired before they attempt to write history before it has been enacted.

Here Moses is dealing with the fact of Israel's shameful overthrow and rout before her enemies, and that in spite of the heavy odds which were on the side of Israel's hosts. If the army of Israel had been beaten by an army two-thirds as large, or one-half as large, or one-quarter as large as that of Israel, there might have been some understanding and explanation of it, for such overthrows have frequently taken place. But there is something altogether different. The army has been beaten, not merely by an inferior host, but one of Israel's enemies has chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight. This is too much to be explained on the ground of superior discipline, organization, or equipment, or the kind of gods which these enemies worshiped. The only explanation is that they were fighting, not only against these heathen enemies, but against God himself. God had gone over to the side of their enemies. That was the secret of their terrible defeat and the disaster which had befallen the nation. Their Rock had sold them. How could one chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight unless their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? The loss of righteousness was followed by the loss of faith, and the loss of faith by the loss of courage. With courage gone, the army was easily beaten. One determined and courageous foe could chase a thousand of the panic-stricken host. All this Moses had already predicted when he had said that if Israel forsook God, the Lord would cause them to be smitten before their enemies and they would flee seven ways before them.

A Parable of Life

For us this explanation of the overthrow of Israel in battle is a timeless parable of life. When God is with us none can stand before us. If God be for us, who can be against us? When God is against us, we are weak. The secret of yielding before temptation, of dismay and surrender before the trials and adversities of life, of fear and gloom, instead of courage and hope, is that God and man are on different sides. Our Rock has sold us, and our Lord has shut us up.

Moses, of course, is speaking in the poetic language of the orient. It is in this great farewell speech and song of his that we have for the first time the name, Rock, applied to God in his relationship to man, a name now so precious to the church, and forever enshrined in our great hymn, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me." In the inter-tribal and racial warfare of that ancient world, men had their strongholds high up on some beetling crag, or rocky eminence. Once established in that rocky fortress, even a small group of men could hold at bay a great host. But if they ventured out on the plain, or into the valley below, they could be overcome and put to the sword. "God," Moses says, "is such a Rock for his people." In him they have strength and safety. When they forget him and get away from their Rock, they are beaten and broken.

Moses does not mean to teach that God changes his principles, or that by caprice he takes this side or that side, according to the desire of the moment; but that when men forsake God, their Rock, then they are weak. It is not God who changes, for with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, but man. When some earnest patriots were talking to Lincoln about praying that God might be on the side of the North, he answered that what he was anxious about was that the North might be on God's side. So we might turn this verse about and render it thus. How could the armies of Israel be so shamefully and disgracefully routed by a handful of enemies unless they had forgotten and forsaken God? While this truth will have its meaning for non-Christians and non-believers, it is a truth which is spoken primarily for the instruction, guidance and warning of those who have named the name of God, and have set themselves to keep his commandments.

The godly man, the man of faith, will not be without his trials and troubles and battles. Yet, in them he is never without hope, faith, and courage. Like the

great struggler of the New Testament, "he is troubled, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." But, when a once believing man forsakes God, his troubles are unnerving, overthrowing, cutting all the cords of his strength.

The Degeneration of Personality

Now and then we see strange changes come over the once godly man; sometimes slowly, hardly to be discerned at the moment, and sometimes with a strange rapidity. The man's character has changed; his personality has deteriorated. This may not be noted in any one particular thing, but the tone and atmosphere of his life is different. Speaking to me once of an old student of his, occupying a position of importance in a distant city, a venerable college president said to me after his last visit to this man, "There's something wrong!" He could not *see* anything wrong. Just what it was he could not state, yet he was sure that there was something different, something wrong. Such a difference can be accounted for only by an internal change.

Again, the change may show itself in different standards. The man no longer stands squarely and rigidly for the highest things. A sort of moral sag is observable in his make-up, and there is a distinct inclination towards the standards of the world. The old loyalties are gone. They have struck their tents and vanished.

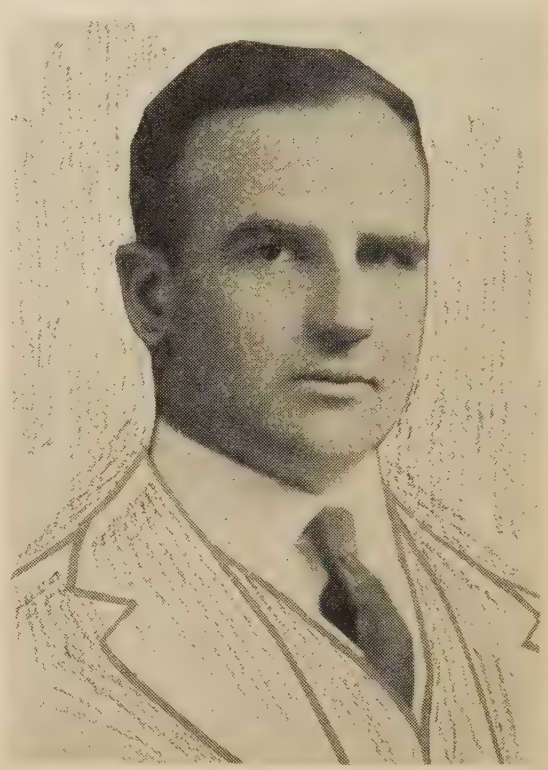
Again, the change may show itself in a difference of nature and disposition. He who was calm and patient is now easily excited and irritable; once thoughtful and considerate, he is now sharp, ugly, selfish. Those who suffer most by this change look into his face and wonder at this strange metamorphosis of character.

In an advanced stage this break between a man and God may express itself in the flagrant doing of what is wrong, without any attempt to hide, without any effort to defend. The man has come to that dread state where he says to evil, "Evil, be thou my good!" Whatever brave front the man may put on, or whatever brilliant pretense at not caring or not feeling, deep within him there is unrest, disharmony, unhappiness. The man is out of tune with God. Whoever goes from God his Rock is weak and fearful and easily overcome. Temptation and trouble find him an easy victim.

All this is in keeping with the moral laws of the universe. It is one of the most frequently expressed and reiterated teachings of God's word, that when a man fights with God on his side he is invincible. But when he fights against God, no natural gifts can save him from overthrow. How strikingly and dramatically this is illustrated for us in the Bible! There was Samson, who, when the spirit of the Lord began to move him, did mighty exploits; but when he forsook the Lord, and in the lap of Delilah sold the secret of his strength, the Philistines took him and bound him. The saddest thing about that story is this—"He wist not that the Lord had departed from him." What a spectacle he is! Bound with fetters of brass, sightless and hopeless, grinding in the mill at Gaza. And yet all that happened to Samson, in its moral sense, at least, happens to men today; and sometimes, like Samson, who wist not that the Lord had departed from him, they know not the secret of the loss of their strength.

The Tragedy of Saul

And there is Saul, to whom God gave a new heart, and the morning of whose reign is so bright and radiant in contrast with its tragic sunset. As long as Saul was obedient to God and waited for the word of his prophecy, all was well. But when he turned away from God, he found that instead of the new heart, he had to contend with an evil spirit from the Lord. Hence-



Clarence E. Macartney

forth, Saul's history is a tragedy, and we see this wreck of a once great man, with the waves of anger, jealousy, suspicion, and remorse breaking over him with a melancholy reverberation which still sounds in the world today.

And there was David, too, now so wonderful in his humility, in his magnanimity, generosity, gratitude, thanksgiving, loving even his enemies, his life like a great Psalm breathed out to God. But when he falls away from God, then it is a different thing to see; it is a life which displays human nature in its darkest and most terrible colors and powers, a David who has God against him, and from whose house the sword never departs. The difference in these two Davids is like the difference in the November landscape, when the sun is shining, rich in color and mystic beauty, and now, when the sun is behind the clouds, dark, gray, sullen, barren.

Let no one imagine that this kind of history is confined to the Old Testament. No! It is repeated from day to day, and men all around us are chased, beaten,

pursued, vanquished, because they have forsaken their Rock, and their Rock has sold them. God will not permit himself, easily, and without suffering and loss and weakness, to be dismissed from our life. If he cannot show his power for us, then he will show his power against us.

Our greatest need is that God should be made a living power in our lives. Let us think of him as our Rock. When we have our feet planted on that Rock, when our first purpose is to do his will, when our deepest dread is to sin against him, then we have faith, and faith is the mother of courage, and courage is the mother of hope, and hope the mother of victory. The world knows something of Charlotte Bronte and her famous "Jane Eyre"; not so much of another of the sisters, Emily, the author of a powerful book, "Wuthering Heights." The promise of this book was not fulfilled, for death cut short her career. When they opened her desk after her death, and looked over the papers—those papers always so impressive, because written by a hand that is forever still—they found no begun or half finished novel, but a poem which is a fit monument to the woman's heroic spirit. One of the stanzas runs thus:

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere,
I see heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear,
Oh, God, within my breast,
Almighty; ever-present Deity,
Life, that in me has rest,
As I—undying life—have power in Thee.

Beloved, keep yourselves in the love of God. There are many tides today which are sweeping men away from the love of God. Make God your Rock, and then you are strong. Forsake him, you are weak. In the house alongside the City Road chapel, made forever memorable by the preaching of John Wesley, they show you the room where Wesley died on a March day in 1791. Sometime before his death, he had been trying vainly to make those who stood by his bed understand what he would say. He kept silent for a few moments, and then, gathering all his strength, uttered in a clear, loud voice those words which have become a watchword of the church he founded, "The best of all—God is with us."

Lives to Duty Wed

THE sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of an unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpet, ring no bells,
The book of life the shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life working. A child's kiss
Set on thy singing lips shall make thee glad;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

The Dimensions of the Cross

(A Communion Meditation)

BY CORNELIUS MUILENBURG

Christ crucified . . . the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 1 *Corinthians* 1:23, 24.

THE cross stands at the center of life. Unmarred by the tools of time, its rugged outline stands in undying silhouette against the sky. Here the Christ, in perennial agony over human sin—a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—rears his redemptive monument in the midst of "the years which the locusts have eaten." His cross stands at the goal of all progress and at the end of the way of transgression where the wages of sin are paid.

Man, even at his worst, has known the ministry of the cross. In its name he has received more than he deserves and, even while expiating his sin, has known the solace of sympathy and love. Man at his best shall never go beyond it. "Hold our heads as high as we may," says John Middleton Murray, "they shall be bowed at the last."

The cross stands at the center of the Christian life. Its crest is high; it reaches into heaven. And its message is as high. It proclaims the love of God for man. It points to a God who is a Father. It declares in the unforgettable language of words made flesh the reality of a personal Spirit. It points an unswerving finger at that solemn but wonderful truth that heaven and earth are bound together by a tie of divine compassion. It proclaims the existence of a realm of undiscovered values, challenging man to the adventure of spiritual exploration.

We face the cross after almost twenty centuries of Christian history. We confront it at a time when belief in evolution is widespread. Growth is a law of life. But progress is not automatic. Heaven in the form of Utopia or the Kingdom of God will not arrive as the inevitable fruitage of the centuries. Much less is the Christian heaven a moral certainty guaranteed by the operation of unchanging law.

The voice of Spengler has been raised in Europe and its heavy accents have rolled across the seas. He speaks of the twilight of civilization. Mankind, surfeited with too much knowledge, satiated by the abundant fruits of culture is, according to this prophet, treading the downward way. Civilization, world-weary and minus the integrating enthusiasm of the pioneer, is bending the cycle of life downward. And unless it is shaken at its core, reborn in its heart and reinspired in its every artery by a sense of obligation to a personal God, no power on earth can stay its downward course.

For thousands, the crest of the cross is shrouded in the gloom of disillusionment and despair. For far too many the light of heaven has dimmed. Walter Lipp-

mann mourns the passing of heaven from the ken of man. Rather desperately he tries to love again, on one dismal plane. But when the crest of the cross is hidden one great reason for faith and hope and love passes away. One voice has been heard in our land, crying,

> Never love with all your heart,
> 'Twill only end in aching;
> And bit by bit, to the smallest part
> That organ will be breaking.

Bertrand Russell, too, has lost the light of heaven. His universe is not home. In precise, relentless phrases he pronounces the doom of man. "The life of man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, toward a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long . . . Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark." He asks, in a spirit which must evoke our admiration, that man face his doom courageously, and by the light of love. But he does not summon man to face life radiantly, expectantly. He would not dare to ask that much.

It is well that these voices have been raised. Millions are living on the assumption that the millennium will come without the moral and spiritual cooperation of man. We confront the cross in the light of our times. It points to what Karl Barth has shown to be the awful majesty of God. The Christian must not deem the existence of God an easy certainty. The cross portrays the climax of the most daring assumption of the human heart, upheld by the tortured hand of sacrificial love. Love is never an easy passion. Sometimes it can be truly awful. The crest of the cross is marked by the head of the Crucified.

Unless mankind is star-led, as Joseph Fort Newton reminds us, what hope have we? But are we taking the star too much for granted? If so, Spengler and Lippmann and Russell shall find future justification for their views. Or has the crest of the cross been proved an illusion by our wise men? If so there are those who can testify of one who, in her last hour on this earth, ought not to have smiled.

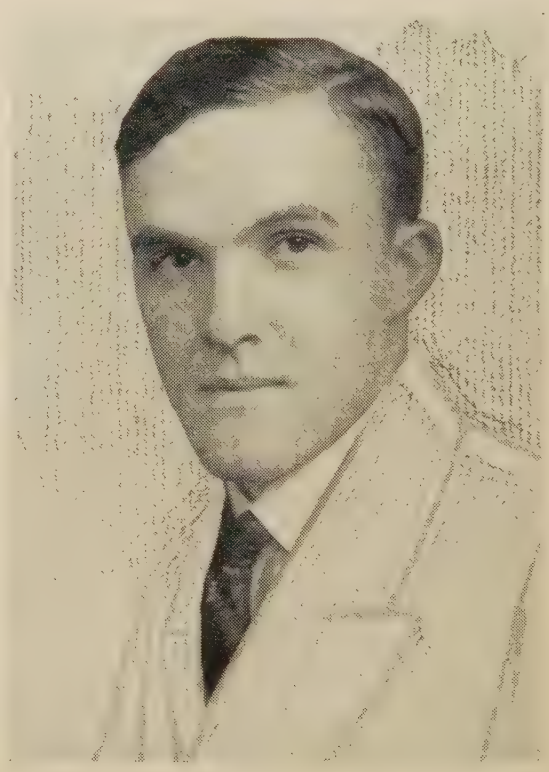
II

The cross is deep; its beam penetrates into hell. It takes account of the tragedy of life, its heartbreaks, its unrequited loves, its inevitable defeats, its sin and shame. It recognizes the eternal salvability of man, revealing that life cherishes values which transform the human soul in the midst of its conflict with the forces of the world.

When the deists of England banished God into the far reaches of his universe, leaving the world to be operated by the laws which he had ordained, they began a work which, if it had been continued for long, would have destroyed religion from the face of the earth. For they ignored the greatest law of all, that one which requires that God be near to human life, nearer than the beating of the heart, nearer than hands and feet. Forgiveness is the fruit of the immutable law of love. The word became flesh in obedience to this law in order that he might bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound.

The beam of the cross stands as a monument to the redemptive work of God. Our past can be forgiven. The years which the locusts have eaten can be restored. Saul can become Paul. "Simon plus Jesus equals Peter." God can be added to the equation of life. The beam of the cross—rugged, massive—stands in our midst.

A Christian and an unbeliever were walking in the desert, searching for Christ. It was night. Ahead loomed the mountains, wild and bare. On one of the



Cornelius Muilenburg

peaks the pilgrims described two figures. One had fallen; the other was stooping over him. The unbeliever asked his companion, "Which one is Christ?" He received the reply, "Christ is the one stooping." It is the characteristic posture of God.

So runs the legend as it has been told. The lost soul, as Francis Thompson has pointed out so beautifully, is forever pursued by the Hound of Heaven. Caught in the embrace of a love that "wilt not let him go," he rejoices in the reality of redeeming love.

Is God so near to human life? Again, as we confront the cross, we must not make this an easy certainty. He may be near, but he may also be impotent to help us. There have been times when God was a Prisoner of the Temple. Banished behind the veil, he was forced to preserve his holiness in the solitude of walls raised by man. Periodically the priest approached him by the formal etiquette of a frozen reverence. And when the priest returned, too often God remained behind.

The beam of the cross stands in our midst, but we

must not forget that it was erected in order that Jesus might be crucified, might be rendered impotent. Unless we pledge to it our moral cooperation and our spiritual obeisance, its full meaning and rich promise will never be realized in terms of redemption. Francis Thompson was not caught until he stopped his flight. Christ stands at the door of the soul. He knocks, but he does not attempt to batter his way in. There is a divine courtesy. There is a courtesy of the cross.

III

The arms of the cross are wide; they embrace in their compass all humanity. We have a world Christ.

> No planet knows that this
> Our wayside planet, carrying land and wave,
> Love and life multiplies, and pain and bliss,
> Bears as chief treasure one forsaken grave.

It is unthinkable that the breadth of our tolerance should be less than Christ's breadth of love. Yet many, many times this has been true. We have refused place at the Lord's table those whom Christ receives. We have refused to walk with those whom Christ welcomes as friends. Oftentimes we have measured the dimensions of the cross with meticulous care, while proclaiming the infinite love of God, and the while limiting the breadth of his arms in accordance with the decree of a denominational yardstick.

Confronting the cross we are made conscious of those who are not gathered with us; of those who are absent not because they do not believe but because we do not love. Our sins of commission have been many. Our sins of omission have been more. Remembering the clash of creed, the bitterness of war, the intolerance of race and class prejudice, the narrowing greed of nationalism, it is meet for us to welcome our penitence as in itself a gift from the cross.

When the World Christian Endeavor convention held its concluding session in Berlin two years ago, all the delegates rose to sing "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." As they sang, delegates on the platform waved the flags of their respective countries. It was a great tribute to the Christ of the world. It was testimony to the wide range of divine love, the breadth of the arms of the cross.

But it was more than that. It was a prophecy of what ought to be, of what we believe shall be. For shall we ever dare to shorten the span of those arms?

In the history of the Christian church there have been seven principal doctrines of the cross. These doctrines have attempted to include its crest, its beam, and its arms. At one time or another each of them has occupied a prominent place in the thought of Christians. All of them have been assented to by men and women who lived saintly, spiritually creative lives.

But there is an eighth doctrine of the cross. It has never been formulated in terms of thought, and has never been defended by means of words. Rather it defines itself in terms of those feelings of penitence, awe and reverence which sweep through the worshiper as he kneels before the Crucified. And there is but one legitimate apologetic for this doctrine: the sacrificial, consecrated discipleship which Calvary inspires. If we look closely we find this eighth doctrine implicit in the other seven.

But if we assent to the seven and neglect to find the eighth, we shall by our lives be living proofs of the saying, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The arms of the cross are wide. When their yearning gesture of invitation has been accepted, men of every station and tongue shall come to the table upon which are laid the bread and wine symbolizing this death, walking together to the cadence of love and kneeling together with hearts alike quickened by the throb of one pulse beat divine.

VERSE

Three Steps

THREE steps there are our human life must climb.
The first is Force.
The savage struggled to it from the slime
And still it is our last, ashamed recourse.

Above that jagged stretch of red-veined stone
Is Marble Law,
Carven with long endeavor, monotone
Of patient hammers, not yet free from flaw.

Three steps there are our human life must climb.
The last is Love,
Wrought from such starry element sublime
As touches the White Rose and Mystic Dove.

KATHARINE LEE BATES.

When You Work with Love

I SAY that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge.
And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge.
And all knowledge is vain save when there is work.
And all work is empty save when there is love.
And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.

KHALIL GIBRAN.

I Have a Rendezvous with Life

I HAVE a rendezvous with Life,
In days I hope will come,
Ere youth has sped, and strength of mind,
Ere voices sweet grow dumb.
I have a rendezvous with Life,
When Spring's first heralds hum.
Sure some would cry it's better far
To crown their days with sleep
Than face the road, the wind and rain,
To heed the calling deep.
Though wet nor blow nor space I fear,
Yet fear I deeply, too,
Lest Death should meet and claim me ere
I keep Life's rendezvous.

COUNTEE CULLEN.

WHO'S WHO IN THIS ISSUE

FROM a Baptist college professor—successor to the late Walter Rauschenbusch in Rochester Theological seminary—Dr. JUSTIN WROE NIXON was called to be pastor of a Presbyterian church—the Brick church—of Rochester some ten years ago. He is still there, in spite of the persistent efforts of church after church to lure him away. What a preacher he is, with his wide background of culture, a realistic mentality, a fine pastoral feeling, and the courage of a Hebrew prophet!

Graduating from Union seminary in 1890, Rev. W. T. MCELVEEN was ordained in the Congregationalist ministry. His ministry has taken him to many states; his pastorates have been in New York city, Brooklyn, Boston, Evanston, Ill., Chicago, Portland, Ore., St. Paul, Minn., and Atlanta, Ga. The sermon included in this issue was preached in Atlanta where Dr. McElveen ministers to the United church (Congregational).

By virtue of thorough academic and theological training, and consecration to the work of the ministry, Rev. G. RAY JORDAN, though a young man, has made for himself a secure place in his chosen field of service. He has his A. B. from Duke, his divinity degree from Emory and his master's degree from Yale. His church—Wesley Memorial Methodist at High Point, N. C.—has raised more money for missions during the past year than any other church of southern Methodism, with but one or two exceptions. Mr. Jordan has several books to his credit, one of them just from the press—"The Intolerance of Christianity," to which the sermon in this issue gives the title.

An Australian chaplain in the world war, on leave in London, was asked to supply the pulpit of City Temple for a Sunday. He made so favorable and memorable an impression that when Dr. Joseph Fort Newton resigned to return to America, the Temple called Dr. FREDERICK W. NORWOOD, the Australian chaplain, to be his successor. A herculean task it was that he undertook, but he is a herculean personality, and his ministry has been one of great blessing and power. He frequently visits this country and everywhere commands a great hearing.

Born on a Nebraska ranch, reared in a Methodist parsonage, Rev. B. Z. STAMBAUGH went as a young man to Boston university school of theology as a special student for three years. He was pastor of two Congregational churches in Massachusetts between 1916 and 1920. He studied for orders in the Episcopal church while serving as assistant at St. Paul's cathedral, Detroit, and was rector of Christ church, Adrian, Mich., from 1922 to 1926. Since 1926 he has been rector of the Church of Our Savior at Akron, O. Dr. Stambaugh was special summer preacher the past summer at Trinity cathedral, Cleveland.

Rev. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY *received* his A. B. from the University of Wisconsin, his M. A. from Princeton; he graduated from Princeton seminary and was ordained in the Presbyterian ministry in 1905. His early pastorates were in Paterson, N. J., and Philadelphia, but since 1927 he has ministered to First church, Pittsburgh. He was elected moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. in 1924. Among Dr. Macartney's books are "Twelve Great Questions About Christ," "Putting on Immortality," "Paul the Man" and "Lincoln and His Generals."

Rev. CORNELIUS MUILENBURG *has recently* come to the leadership of Westminster church (Presbyterian), Lansing, Mich., having ministered to the Church of the Redeemer, Manistique, Mich., since his graduation, in 1927, at the Presbyterian seminary, Chicago. His academic education was received at the University of Nebraska where he was graduated in 1924.

Rev. JAMES DALTON MORRISON *is* minister of Immanuel Baptist church, Rochester, N. Y.

TITLES *and* TEXTS

What PULPIT Readers are Preaching About

MILES H. KRUMBINE, Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights, Cleveland, O. "Inverted Hypocrisy." Matt. 5:16—"Let your light so shine bofore men that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven."

ROY H. BROWN, Irving Park Presbyterian, Chicago. "Impotent Idleness." Matt. 20:7—"Because no man has hired us."

JOHN R. EWERS, East End Christian, Pittsburgh. "Your Name." Prov. 22:1—"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor than silver and gold."

ARTHUR B. PATTEN, First Congregational, Madison, Conn. "Handling Handicaps." 2 Cor. 12:10—"I glory in necessities."

PERCY H. NICKLESS, First Presbyterian, Ponca City, Okla. "Broken Cisterns." Jer. 2:13—"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

VICTOR F. CLARK, Congregational, Lebanon, Mo. "The Gospel for This Age." Isa. 1:27—"Zion shall be redeemed with justice."

B. B. BAIRD, First Christian, Aurora, Neb. "Creative Grace." 1 Cor. 15:10—"By the grace of God I am what I am."

A. J. HOBBS, JR., Centenary Methodist, New Bern, N. C. "The Divine Imperative." Luke 2:49—"I must."

E. H. BABBITT, Methodist, Watervliet, Mich. "Sin, the Detective." Num. 32:23—"Be sure your sin will find you out."

N. ASTRUP LARSEN, First Lutheran, Sioux City, Ia. "If We Took Jesus Seriously." John 13:34—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye also love one another."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT
(Mail to The Christian Century Pulpit)

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Text used (Write out the text)

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The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WESTERN CIVILIZATION has never experienced an event so dramatically expressive of the clash of two fundamental world views as that which the presence of Gandhi in London is enacting daily. The life of Francis of Assisi had some of the elements of such a drama, but it lacked the stage setting which modern communication makes possible. The founders of all the great religions spoke their messages and performed their deeds in a corner, as compared to the world-wide attention which the telegraph, the radio and the press of today are able in an instant to focus upon the picturesque little man who has come out of the east to demand freedom for his 360,000,000 people. This is not the place to discuss the political issues involved. But when Mr. Gandhi, speaking in simple and forthright words, paints a picture of the consequences of Britain's refusal to give independence to India, he does not threaten an attack upon Britain, but a refusal to recognize her and to deal with her. For the first time in history, the appeal is made, on a large scale, to the ethics with which Christians are at least theoretically familiar. Gandhi's threat is not force, but something that he calls "soul force." Non-violent non-cooperation is his gospel. We will not fight you, says Gandhi to Great Britain, but we will not cooperate with you if you continue to insist on ruling us; we will suffer, we will shed our own blood, but we will not spill yours; the world is wearied with the long history of blood-spilling as a means to liberty; we hope by non-violence to win liberty for ourselves, and to show all mankind the new and better way. Can Britain hope to rule a people who thus make physical force absurd?

Mr. Gandhi In London

The Book of the Month

THE PROSPECTS OF HUMANISM, *by Lawrence Hyde. Charles Scribner & Sons,* $3.50.

HUMANISM AND AMERICA. *Edited by Norman Foerster. Farrar & Rinehart,* $3.50.

INSTEAD of recommending one book, this month, I mention two, in order to recommend, not one or two, but a whole field of literature in which I believe the minister will find both food for his own soul and inspiration for his preaching. I refer to the field of literary criticism. As a rule, ministers confine their book-reading to a too narrow field, that of theology and practical church work. But there are other angles of approach to the preacher's task. It is a growing belief of mine that those writers who approach modern life as analysts and critics of our culture have something even more vital to say to our spiritual leaders than have the theologians and the technical philosophers. The two books mentioned above have much in common, though Mr. Hyde is a sharp and searching critic of Irving Babbitt and the school of humanistic thought, samples of whose writings Mr. Foerster has brought together in his book. (This "humanism" is not to be confused with the anti-theistic "humanism" which has lately been disturbing the Unitarian denomination.) Both books represent a revolt from the sort of culture which the ruling ideas of our scientific era have produced. The humanists insist upon the revival of classic ideals and standards. They protest against the romanticism of undisciplined self-expansion and self-expression, and call us back to a principle of moderation—"in nothing too much"—to be exercised under the standards of culture slowly erected by the experience of the past. Mr. Hyde is equally critical of modern culture and the educational process which produces it. But he goes clean beyond the humanists to religion, which he contends is no mere revival of ancient standards, but a creative power which can be released only through an experience of regeneration.

A Thought for the Month

MOST PEOPLE think that tolerance carries with it a lack of conviction on one's own part. How can one show respect for the convictions of others and at the same time contend vigorously for his own convictions? We have here an apparent dilemma. The commonest way to solve it is by holding our own convictions lightly or tentatively, or discounting their importance, or giving them up altogether. After all, we say, who am I that I should believe thus and thus when there are others equally competent and more competent who believe otherwise? That is the popular way of achieving tolerance. And with many it is regarded as a way of virtue. But it is not a way of virtue, and the goal to which it leads is not worthy of our intellectual and moral life. It is surrender, not victory. It is weakness and flabbiness, not strength. A true ideal of tolerance which asks me to respect the convictions of others must leave me with my own convictions which others, by the same token, are bound to respect. As a matter of fact, I cannot respect other people's convictions if I have none of my own. Tolerance is possible only if I earnestly believe something on my own account. If I scorn my own convictions I am sure to hold other people's convictions in contempt, no matter how I may disguise my contempt under suave manners. Let me, however, pay the price which gives me the right to have a belief of my own—the price of patient, humble, open-minded, and even painful, search for the truth, and I will be bound to have respect for the beliefs of others which have been bought at the same high cost to them.

Tolerance

Charles Clayton Morrison

The CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT

has as its chief purpose to help the minister in his important task as preacher and pastor. Readers of the Pulpit say that the magazine is living up to its purpose.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

In an early issue, the Pulpit will inaugurate a department of Practical Church Problems. In each issue some one problem will be considered. The country is being scoured to find the men who can best present these problems and tell how they are solving them. Already several leaders are preparing articles on such subjects as the Sunday evening service, putting the laymen to work, personal evangelism, etc.

In each issue one genuinely helpful article on one problem—by one who knows. Watch for the new department!

In the meantime, write and tell us what subjects you would like to see considered. More important, tell us just what your chief problem is, and who you would like to have treat that problem in this new department—which is YOUR department, not ours.

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